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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 000792

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EU](#) [SW](#)

SUBJECT: SWEDEN ON THE EU EASTERN PARTNERSHIP AND NORDSTREAM

REF: A. STOCKHOLM 757

[1](#)B. STOCKHOLM 729

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Robert Silverman for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The EU Foreign Ministers will discuss the draft plan for the Eastern Partnership initiative at the December 8 GAERC, paving the way for the first Eastern Partnership summit scheduled for April 2009 in Prague, according to Swedish MFA contacts. Unique features of the Eastern Partnership include treating the region as a single entity for social, parliamentary, and immigration issues, and establishing target deadlines, such as a regional "deep" FTA by 2012. Though not a security policy instrument, the initiative has strong long-term security implications.

[1](#)2. (C) On a separate note, our MFA contacts said the Nordstream consortium's first environmental application to Sweden was "so appalling" that the process had been set back by at least a year, and that it could take many years before approval to build the pipeline across Sweden's EEZ would be granted. End Summary.

Eastern Partnership Held "Hostage" to Russia Talks  
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[1](#)3. (C) On November 21, Poloffs met with Johan Frisell, deputy of the MFA's Eastern Europe desk, to deliver a demarche (ref A) and follow up on the Eastern Partnership initiative (ref B). As EU states prepared for the November GAERC and EU-Russia Summit, France threatened to stall the Eastern Partnership initiative if the Swedes and others opposed to "business as usual" with Moscow refused to resume EU-Russia talks, according to Frisell. But once the decision on talks on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was made, Sweden and Poland, co-drafters of the initiative, were given a green light to "move ahead," Frisell told us. The Swedes and Poles are now finalizing the draft plan for the Eastern Partnership, which will be discussed by the EU Foreign Ministers at the December 8 GAERC, he added. The EU Commission would be in the "driver's seat" to develop the details of the proposal, with a goal of a formal launch in March and the first Eastern Partnership summit in Prague in April, Frisell said.

Eastern Partnership Treats Region Holistically  
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[1](#)4. (C) Asked how the Eastern Partnership differs from other projects like the European Neighborhood Policy, Frisell replied that the goal is the creation of a sub-region of six states -- Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia -- that the EU will relate to "as a whole." Efforts to shape civil society would be done "regionally," and parliamentary cooperation would be targeted at the legislatures of all six states simultaneously. On immigration, the goal would be a "visa-free regime, extending Schengen to these countries." So rather than try to shape the development of individual countries, Frisell said, "we want to shape the development of this important region

adjacent to the EU." Also, future efforts at enlargement and integration would be aimed at "making these six states work more closely together." Frisell referred to the Western Balkans as an example of the importance of a regional approach.

15. (C) Another difference between the Eastern Partnership and the EU Neighbor Policy is that the former will have "some sort of roadmap or timetable" with target dates, including, for example, a target date of 2012 for a regional FTA with the EU. Saying that the goal was a deep FTA covering "goods, services, and so forth," Frisell said that the Eastern Partnership was essentially an "invitation" to the six states to join the EU internal market.

#### Security Cooperation Not Too Direct

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16. (C) Frisell pointed out that the Eastern Partnership is not a security policy instrument per se, although its "effects could have benefits for security in the long term" as societal change that moves a country closer to the EU has "security implications." "Profound EU integration is every bit as important as Article 5," he added. Moscow is "agnostic" on European Neighborhood Policy, in part because it has seriously underestimated the impact of soft power. To the extent that the Eastern Partnership's related security cooperation remains "under the Russian radar," it will be successful, he said. The joint-exercises and staff-to-staff talks envisioned would be "on par" with what the EU offered to Russia prior to the Georgia conflict.

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#### Energy: Not Enough Talk -- but Nordstream Stalled?

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17. (C) Energy projects that move Eastern Partnership members closer to Europe but away from Russia would be "too political," Frisell said. Although Nabucco has been discussed among EU states and has a green light, little discussion of other proposed pipelines such as Nordstream has taken place, Frisell offered. He added that the first set of documents presented by the Nordstream consortium in its application for an environmental permit were "so appalling" that the "process" has been set back at least a year. Frisell said all public signs from Sweden's political leadership support Nordstream, for "greater diversity leads to decreased dependency." However, he added, "remember that the bridge to Denmark took 8-10 years to approve" because of challenges and appeals based on environmental concerns. Approvals for the Nordstream pipeline to cross Sweden's EEZ would take at least as long, said Frisell with a grin.

SILVERMAN